

Thursday, June 14, 2007

House Meets At...	Votes Predicted At...
10:00 a.m. For Legislative Business	Last Vote: Evening
Ten "One-minutes" Per Side	

**Any anticipated Member absences for votes this week should be reported to the Office of the Majority Whip at 226-3210.**

### Floor Schedule and Procedure

- **Complete consideration of H.R. 2638 – Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2008 (Rep. Price (NC) – Appropriations):** Pursuant to the rule, debate will be managed by Appropriations Committee Chair Rep. David Obey, or his designee, and will proceed in the following order:
  - Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
  - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
  - Vote on passage of the bill. **Democrats are urged to vote yes on final passage.**
- **H. Res. 480–Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 2648–The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2008 (Rep. Welch–Rules):** The open rule provides for one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rep. Welch and consideration will proceed in the following order:
  - One hour of debate on the rule.
  - Possible vote on a Democratic motion to move the previous question. **Democrats are urged to vote yes on the motion.**
  - Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote yes on adoption of the rule.**
- **H.R. 2648–The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2008 (Rep. Edwards – Appropriations):** Pursuant to the rule, debate on the bill will be managed by Appropriations Committee Chair Rep. David Obey, or his designee, and will proceed in the following order:
  - One hour of debate on the bill.

- Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
- Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
- Vote on passage of the bill. **Democrats are urged to vote yes on final passage.**

### **Bill Summary and Key Issues**

#### **H.R. 2638 – DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2008**

##### **Bill Total:**

**2007 Enacted:** \$33.7 billion

**President's Request:** \$34.2 billion

**Committee Mark:** \$36.3 billion

- **First Responder and Port Security Grant Programs:** \$4.52 billion, \$1.97 billion above President's request and \$863 million above 2007. These grants were funded at \$4.92 billion in 2004 and have been cut every year since even as homeland security costs have continued to rise.
- **REAL ID Grants:** \$50 million, not funded in 2007 or in President's request, to help states to comply with REAL ID, an unfunded mandate requiring state licenses to meet new standards.
- **Transportation Security Administration:** \$6.62 billion, \$307 million above 2007 and \$219 million above President's request. This includes Explosive Detection System: \$849 million and Air Cargo Explosive Screening: \$78 million.
- **Customs and Border Protection:** \$8.8 billion, \$50 million above President's request and \$797 million above 2007. This includes \$1 billion for border security fencing and tactical infrastructure and 3,000 additional border patrol agents. The Committee mark adds \$27 million for 250 additional Customs and Border Patrol Officers for commercial operations and C-TPAT validation.
- **Immigration and Customs Enforcement:** \$4.8 billion (including Federal Protective Service), \$322 million above 2007 and \$15 million above President's request.
- **US-VISIT:** \$462 million, \$99 million above 2007 and matching President's request, for tracking foreign visitors to the U.S. \$230 million is withheld until DHS provides a complete schedule for the exit program or a certification that it cannot be implemented within five years, as well as a detailed accounting of operations and maintenance and contractor costs.
- **Infrastructure Protection:** \$272 million, \$32 million above President's request and \$44 million above 2007 to identify critical infrastructure, and assess security vulnerabilities.
- **FEMA Management:** \$685 million, \$17 million above President's request and \$150 million above 2007, including funding for regional offices tasked with helping state and locals prepare for and respond to disasters.
- **Disaster Relief Fund:** \$1.7 billion, equal to President's request and \$200 million above 2007, for assistance to state and local governments following a declared disaster or emergency.
- **Flood Map Modernization:** \$230 million, \$35 million above President's request and \$31 million above 2007, to modernize and digitize over

100,000 flood maps used to determine rates for National Flood Insurance Program.

- **Pre-Disaster Mitigation:** \$120 million, \$20 million above President's request and 2007, for projects that reduce the risks associated with disasters.

### **SIGNIFICANT CUTS**

- **Deepwater:** \$197 million below President's request for the Coast Guard's Deepwater acquisition program with reductions to projects with high carryover funding and to projects where the lead asset has not yet been tested.
- **DHS Departmental Operations:** \$923 million, \$72 million below the President's request, the same level as enacted in 2007.
- **Emergency Telecommunications:** \$128.5 million for future wireless emergency systems that DHS proposed expanding by 350% but had not justified or clearly planned.
- **Science and Technology:** \$777 million, \$22 million below President's request and \$19 million above 2007, cut because 1/3 of authorized staff positions are vacant and purchase of new BioWatch air-monitoring systems will not occur until a study on their effectiveness is completed.
- **Domestic Nuclear Detection Office:** \$516 million, \$46 million below President's request and \$35 million above 2007. Cuts are made to the request due to staff vacancies, plans to purchase fewer next generation portal monitors than originally estimated, and cuts to the Securing the Cities program because there is not agreement on how it will operate.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT POLICY ITEMS**

- **Competition:** Requires all grant and contract funds are obligated through a full and open competitive process except where other funding distribution mechanisms are in statute and allows DHS Secretary to waive this requirement in emergencies.
- **Davis-Bacon:** Mandates that all grant and contract funds only are used for projects that comply with the Davis-Bacon mandate, that federal contractors pay workers no less than the local prevailing wage. President may suspend this provision during a national emergency.
- **Chemical Security:** Allows state and local governments to set chemical security rules that are stronger than the federal government's and sets information protection standards for chemical facility vulnerability and site security plans.
- **Air Carrier Aviation Security Fees:** Allows air carriers to appeal in court fees set by TSA.
- **Federal Protective Service (FPS):** Prohibits DHS from cutting the number of FPS police until FPS provides local law enforcement agencies information on the number and types of cases FPS police handle and reaches agreement with them on how these cases will be handled in the future.
- **Secret Service:** Limits employee overtime to same amount as other DHS entities - \$35,000 per year and grants the Secretary the ability to waive that limit.
- **Limitation on Principal Federal Official positions:** Prohibits any funds from being used to support Principal Federal Official positions during declared disasters or emergencies as these positions overlap with the Federal Coordinating Officer position authorized in statute.

## **H.R. 2642 - 2008 MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS**

### **Bill Total**

**2007 Enacted:** \$52.9 billion (Includes \$3.1 billion in supplemental funding for BRAC)

**President's Request:** \$60.7 billion

**Committee Mark:** \$64.7 billion

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:** \$43.2 billion, \$6.7 billion above 2007 and \$3.8 billion over President's request for veterans' medical care, claims processing personnel, and facility improvements.

- **Veterans Health Administration,** \$37.1 billion, \$2.5 billion over President's request and \$4.4 billion over 2007 for veteran's medical care. Veterans Health Administration estimates they will treat more than 5.8 million patients in 2008 including more than 263,345 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, 54,000 more than fiscal year 2007. This funding includes:
  - **Medical Services:** \$28.9 billion, \$1.7 billion above President request and \$3.4 billion above 2007 to improve access to medical services for all veterans.
  - **New Initiatives to Improve Access to Vital Services:** \$600 million for new initiative for mental health and PTSD, including funding to ensure the five Level I Polytrauma Centers and the three Centers of Excellence for Mental Health and PTSD are operational in 2008.
  - **Mental Health and Substance Abuse:** \$2.9 billion, \$100 million over 2007, matching President's request for specialty mental health care and \$429 million, \$70 million above President's request and \$72 million above 2007 for the Substance Abuse Program.
  - **Assistance for Homeless Vets:** \$130 million, \$23 million above President's request and \$38 million over 2007 for the homeless grants and per diem program to help care for an 2,300 additional homeless veterans.
- **Medical Administration:** \$3.6 billion, \$193 million above President's request and \$458 million above 2007 to ensure the efficient operation of the Department's health care system.
- **Medical Facilities:** \$4.1 billion, \$508 million above President's request and \$530 million above 2007 for on-going maintenance and renovations of existing facilities to address identified shortfalls and to ensure the Department's facilities remain capable of delivering excellent medicine.
- **Medical and Prosthetic Research:** \$480 million, \$69 million above President's request and \$66 million above 2007 for research to improve the quality of life for injured and aging veterans. The increase will help to attack the emerging issues facing those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- **Major Construction:** \$1.4 billion, \$683 million above 2007 to fulfill the Department's commitment to fund recommendations made by the Capitol Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) Commission.
- **Extended Care Facilities:** \$165 million for grants to states for construction and modification of extended care facilities.
- **General Operating Expenses:** \$1.6 billion, \$127 million over President's request and \$117 million above 2007 to enable the Department to hire

roughly 1,100 additional claims processors to work-down the backlog of benefits claims and to reduce the time to process new claims.

- **Information Technology**, \$1.9 billion, \$645 million above 2007, matching President's request to improve the health records system to help ensure that medical information follows patients as they transition from the Department of Defense health system to the VA health system.
- **Phone and Web Assistance**: \$5 million is included within General Operating Expenses for the Department to establish a toll-free telephone number and web page to make it easier for veterans to get assistance and provide feedback.
- **Inspector General**: \$76.5 million, \$5.9 million above 2007 and \$3.9 million over President's request, reversing a three-year decline in staffing for the Office.

**MILITARY CONSTRUCTION**: \$21.4 billion, \$207 million over Administration's request, and \$5.1 billion above 2007 (including BRAC in supplemental). The historic increase is largely due to costs associated with Base Realignment and Closure and plans to increase the size of the Army and Marine Corps.

- **2005 BRAC and Re-stationing**: \$8.2 billion, \$2.5 billion above 2007 and matching President's request to implement base closures and realignments, as well as the re-stationing of 70,000 troops and their families from overseas to the U.S.
- **1990 BRAC**: \$271 million, \$18 million above 2007 and \$50 million above President's request to address an estimated \$3.5 billion backlog in needed environmental cleanup for bases closed during the four previous BRAC rounds identified in most recent Defense Environmental Programs Annual Report.
- **Military Housing**: \$2.9 billion, fully funding President's request for military housing, supporting the elimination of a further 13,727 inadequate family housing units.
- **Growing the Force**: \$2.8 billion to support the Administration's proposal to increase the size of the Army by 65,000, the Marine Corps by 27,000, and the Guard and Reserve by 9,200 over the next five years.

#### **OTHER IMPORTANT POLICY ITEMS**

- **Increased Oversight**: Requires multiple reports how funds are spent and additional Congressional notifications and approvals of transfers and reprogrammings.
- **Future Planning**: Directs the Congressional Budget Office to report on future funding needs for the Department to provide medical care. The Administration's budget predicts that the Veterans Health Administration will need less funding in future years.
- **Improving Records**: Requires VA's Electronic Medical Records be interoperable with the Department of Defense's medical records system.
- **Psychiatric Care**: Prevents a decrease in inpatient beds at facilities with a waiting list for inpatient psychiatric care.

#### **Quote of the Day**

"Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved." -Williams Jennings Bryan